

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration by the Examiner is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks which follow.

The indication of allowability in Claim 16 is acknowledged with appreciation. By this response, Claim 16 has been amended into independent form. Accordingly, Claims 16-20 should be in condition for immediate allowance.

In addition, several minor amendments have been made to address the informalities noted by the Examiner in the Official Action.

Turning now to the prior art rejection, Claims 1-15, 21 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Takabatake EP 0730999. Reconsideration by the Examiner and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested. This reference discloses a support structure to increase damping and sound insulation powers to be arranged in a cavity of a hollow structural member (52) and comprising a foamable material formed by external heating and retained by one or two support pieces or plates (10, 60) and an engagement pin to engage the support structure to an aperture formed in the hollow member.

However, the support structure of the cited reference is specially designed to prevent or retain the expansion of the foamable material in such a manner that at least one side surface is restrictively covered by the support. See page 1, lines 44-45 of the specification. The support member thus prevents the foamable material from expanding in the longitudinal direction of the cavity (page 1, lines 47-48).

On the contrary, according to the present invention, the structure of the support of the foamable material is provided so that the support allows expansion of the expandable material in all directions. For example, such an expansion is illustrated by the expansion ratio of 200-300% in the main plane and 400-600% in a directional orthogonal thereto. See page 3, lines 11-13 of the specification and Figure 4.

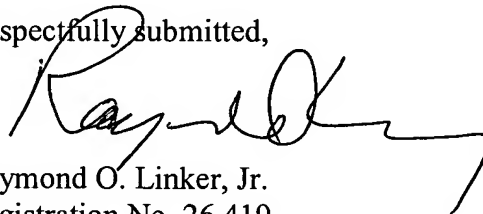
On an opposite side, the expansion of the material of the cited reference, as shown in Figures 4 and 8, only takes place in the main plane of the strip due to the plates (10, 60) which prevent expansion in the orthogonal direction.

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From the teachings of the cited reference, the person of ordinary skill in the art learns that a confined expansion is advantageous, since less material is used or a material with a low expansion ratio. Therefore, this would teach away from a free expansion in all directions as claimed by Applicant. However, such a confined expansion causes the formation of a simple "cork" of foam, and the sound insulation would be considered inadequate. This is specifically avoided by the present invention as claimed. Therefore, it would not be obvious from Takabatake to arrive at the invention as defined in Claim 1 which avoids the requirement of using support members (10, 66), as taught in the prior.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



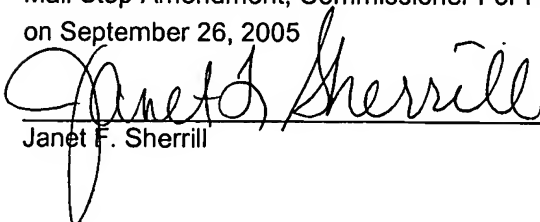
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on September 26, 2005


Janet F. Sherrill

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Amendments to the Drawings:

In the accompanying replacement sheet, reference number "21a" in Fig. 2 has been changed to "210a". This is in response to the requirement by the Examiner.